[33] dividing line of waters which separates the basin of the Paraguay, a tributary of the La Plata River, and the sources of the Arinos River, itself a tributary of the Amazon.

In its general aspect, the region is a sort of vast undulating plateau, falling slowly in the direction of the basin of the Amazon, with the highest points in the center and in the south (about 800 meters) and the lowest (about 350 meters) toward the north and west. Nevertheless, the traveler leaving from the south is greeted by an impressive spectacle when, after having traveled through 1,200 kilometers of high desolate land, he reaches the northwest border of the plateau, compared to the lowlands the difference in altitude is small, 100 meters at the most, but the rise is abrupt. Behind him, he leaves an interminable and sterile brush, while immediately at his feet begins, with the valley of the Gi-Parana, the no less interminable Amazon forest. This remarkable geographic frontier is also the western limit of Nambikwara territories.

Farther to the center and to the north, the aspect is different; running waters have worn ditches across the plateau which become larger in the direction of the Amazon basin. These depressions bring about differences in altitude up to 150 meters. One notices them especially in the region which extends from the Roosevelt River to the Doze de Outubro River, and they give this region a falsely mountainous aspect from which the fallacious expression "Serra do Norte" probably originates.

[34] [32] Geological constitution conspires with climatic conditions to [5] give the plateau its desolate physiognomy. The sand, product of the decomposition of the sandstone, provides a sterile soil, and the irregular distribution of rain explains the prairie-like aspect, so characteristic of the whole region. Except for a little rain—very rare—which falls sometimes in July or August, the "chuvas de caju," one might say that the period from April to September is completely arid. On the contrary, precipitation is violent and almost daily from October to March. There are storms when the rain lasts sometimes one, two or even three consecutive days. During the rainy season the temperature rises; 42 to 44 degrees[1] during the day, cooler at night, with a sudden and brief shower at dawn. But abrupt variations of temperature rather characterize the dry season, probably because of intense nocturnal radiation. It is not rare, at this season, to go from a daytime maximum of 40 degrees to a nocturnal minimum of 8 or 10 degrees. The Indians, who live completely nude, sleep on the ground, [291] [313] and know nothing of the use of coverings either of cloth or fur, suffer cruelly from this circumstance.

[1] [i.e. degrees Centigrade.— Analyst]

121 In other publications (2) we have brought up the question of
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> 2. On dual organization in South America, América Indígena, Mexico, 1944. On certain structural similarities of the Chibcha and Nambikwara languages. Congrès International des Américanistes, Paris, 1947.

knowing if the type of life of the Nambikwara, apparently very primitive, does or does not constitute the authentic vestige of ancient conditions. Considered in the present, their level of culture is certainly very low. They live naked, especially the women, who only wear a thin string of buriti beads around the waist, some earrings, necklaces worn around the neck or looped over the shoulder, [14] bracelets made from the tail of the large armadillo, and, sometimes, some narrow bands of cotton woven by their husbands, or some buriti straw, tightly bound around the biceps, and wooden pins. Besides the same ornaments, the men sometimes put on a sort of straw pompom, fastened to the waist above the sex organs, and smaller ones, attached to cotton bracelets; on the other hand, they do not wear shell bracelets. The complete ignorance of the hammock and the Nambikwara
● [513] custom of sleeping on the ground (or, more rarely, on long strips of the bark of the palm tree paxiuba) has intrigued ethnologists for a long time. This sentiment is shared by neighboring tribes, and the
[101] Paresi, mentioning this peculiarity, call the Nambikwara Uaikoahore, "those who sleep on the ground."

221 The Nambikwara year must be divided into two distinct periods. During the rainy season (from October to March), each group settles on some small elevation rising above the course of some stream. The Indians then construct crude huts with curious variations in form and materials. They burn clearings in the approaches to the forests which
221 occupy the humid valley floor, and there they plant and cultivate
241 gardens principally with the starch-yielding plants of the manihot genus (sweet and bitter) and tobacco, sometimes some peas, cotton, peanuts, and calabash (Lagenaria sp.). They grate the yucca (manioc) on planks covered with the sharp bark of the palm tree, they press it with the aid of a piece of twisted bark. The garden produce furnishes food resources sufficient for part of the sedentary period, and even of use later: the Nambikwara preserve the yucca by burying the residue of the 'grated' pulp in the ground.

221 At the arrival of the dry season, they abandon the village, or rather the site of temporary residence, and each group "breaks up," if one can say that, into several nomadic bands. For about seven

2: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

342 shelter and lights its own fire in the opening. During the rainy season,
[361] villages consisting of one or more beehive huts are built on slight hillocks above the course of a secondary stream. Some of the *Eastern Nambicuara* build only shelters, although larger and stronger than the ones described. The beehive hut is very light, each about 10 to 20 feet (3 to 6 m.) in diameter. The frame consists of several long, supple poles, bent so that both ends can be stuck into the ground and tied together at the top, where they cross. Circular branches running horizontally are tied to the poles at different levels. The *Central* and *Western Nambicuara* have a more elaborate hut (pl. 37, *top*) whose perimeter is about 50 feet (15 m.). It has a central post from the base of which several forked poles run obliquely to support the bent poles of the external frame. "All types of huts are thatched with horizontal layers of palm leaves, those of *Central* and *Western Nambicuara* exactly like the houses of their southern neighbors, the *Kepikiriwat*.

A gabled house without walls was also observed by Roquette-Pinto, who recorded other kinds of temporary huts. Some were built by sticking two branches into the ground, bending them over and attaching them to a horizontal pole tied to two perpendicular posts and covering them with bunches of grass."

352 The *Nambicuara*, although all their neighbors use hammocks, sleep on
●513 bare ground or on flat pieces of bark from the paxiuba palm. Because of this custom, the *Paressí* nicknamed them *Uaikoakôre*, "Those Who Sleep on the Ground."

CLOTHING AND ADORNMENT

[291] Both sexes are naked, except that men sometimes tie a small tuft of
301 buruty straw to their belt to cover the sex organs. Both men and women wear a thin, cotton-thread belt strung with white or black beads cut from river mollusk shells or from tucumã palm nuts. Such beads, with larger triangular pieces of mollusk shells, are also used for necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and other ornaments. Men wear grass or reed pins through their upper and lower lips; and, through their nasal septum, a larger pin made of a jacu (*Penelope*) feather mounted on a stalk covered with plaited cotton thread and porcupine quills and trimmed with a red toucan feather ring. Both sexes wear armlets and anklets of woven cotton, burity straw, feathers, parts of dried birds, fur, or mollusk or crawfish shells. Women wear one or more bracelets cut from the tail of the great armadillo and double bandoleers of plaited cotton dyed with urucú and decorated with porcupine quills. Hair ornaments are confined to men: circlets of plaited straw, of straw and and toucan feathers, or of fur with
[714] feather pendants. War dress consists of a jaguar-skin bonnet (pl. 36, *top, left*) with a long, plaited buriti-straw tail painted with red stripes And darts hanging down from the nape of the neck.

sionaries had not yet learned enough Iranxe to make working with informants possible.

As all of the following information, unless otherwise specified, relates to the Wakítisu band, a short description of this band is in order. Today the band consists of 18 individuals, of which Julio is the chief. About 5 years ago, before a measles epidemic decimated it, the band was roughly twice the size it is today. Julio is a man of middle age, has three wives and two children, and probably holds his leadership by being the strongest and ablest man in the band. Except for one of Julio's wives and her daughter who are Elótasu, the members of the band are Wakítisu and related to one another. Julio took the Elótasu woman from the Elótasu band by killing her husband. He claims he did this because the Elótasu chief stole one of his wives some years ago. He claims he is going to steal another wife, for every chief is supposed to have four. Only three other men, Martin, Marciano, and Joaquin, are married, each having one wife. The remaining four are either widowers or as yet unmarried.

Of all the Indians which I have visited in Mato Grosso the members of this band of Nambicuara were the most miserable. Of the eight men, one had syphilis, another had some kind of infection in his side, another had an injured foot, another was covered with some kind of scaly skin disease from head to foot, and another was deaf and dumb. The women and children, however, appeared to be healthy. Owing to the fact that they use no hammocks but sleep on the ground, they are always covered with dirt. On cold nights they remove the fires and sleep in the warm ashes. The Wakítisu wear clothes only when they are given by the missionaries, who ask that they be worn. Their distaste for bathing permits not only a covering of dust and ashes to accumulate on their skin and hair but also particles of decayed meat and fish, which, combined with stale sweat, makes proximity to them rather distasteful. They also appear to be heavily infected with internal parasites, for their stomaches are distended and they are continually passing wind. On several occasions when a number of them had crowded into the small room we used for working we had to cease work in order to air the room.

In their manners the Nambicuara also contrast sharply with the other tribes I visited. The

clude at least one stretch of river and the "galeria" forest which lines its banks. Except during the planting and harvesting season the members of the band are on the move up and down the narrow confines of the territory. Within this hunting territory they have camping places rather than villages. A semipermanent camp site where fields are cultivated for 2 or 3 years is known as *sinsiéu*. Any place where the band or a family may stop overnight is known as *siénsu*. At present the Wakĺítisu band has one house (*sísu*) at the place where it is farming. The entire band occupies the house, each family having its own fire around which it sleeps at night. The unmarried men gather around another fire. Julio informed me that their house is rectangular with stake walls and a gable roof covered with sapé thatch. Some years ago when the band was larger he said they occupied a different place on which they built three houses. These houses were built by placing a series of saplings into the ground to form an oval. The tops were then fastened to a ridge pole, the framework being covered with sapé or palm fronds. A smaller beehive-shaped house is made in the same way. Houses of this type are from 6 to 10 feet high. Near the living house they build a small flute hut (*sinedónkleu*) and, when the occasion demands, a shaman's hut (*sihdéntsu*).

If the weather is cold while they are out hunting the band or the family may build a temporary brush hut for the night. Sometimes only a windbreak (*siotdutsi*) is considered sufficient. On warm nights during the dry season the group camps under a tree. In favorite hunting places the same camp site will be used repeatedly. When the soil around the permanent camp site or village becomes exhausted, fields are cleared some distance away and small huts are put up for the workers. As the distance increases the old camp site is eventually abandoned and a new camp site is established.

As the Nambicuara do not use hammocks, beds, or seats, there is not much in the way of furniture in their shelters. Utensils are restricted to a few gourd vessels, tin cans, burden baskets and small flat baskets, fire fans, bows and arrows, and tools used by men. When they move, these articles are placed in burden baskets which are carried by the women. The Wakĺítisu do not

5:Roquette-Pinto E-4 (no date)1913 SP17 Nambicuara SP17

Abstract.

Little has hitherto been known of the Nhambiquára who inhabit the valley of the Juruena and are spread thence to the rivers Sararé and Galéra, affluents of the Guaporé. In 1909, an official Brazilian explorer, Colonel Rondon, during his journey in the interior of Matto Grosso, was able to enter into friendly relations with them, collecting ethnological objects, and gathering information of their life, geographical distribution and customs, with those also of the Parecí.

The Parecí give the names Uáikoákorê and Ouihanierê to the Nhambiquára, thus dividing them into two groups. Individuals of the latter group have darker skins and are more warlike. Colonel Rondon appears to have cleared up the meaning of the name Kabixí, which has been a cause of confusion, as often happens with collective names like Bugre, Tapuya, Guaycurú and others. The dwellers in Villa Bella (Matto Grosso) were accustomed to call Kabixí those Indians whom the Parecí called Uáikoákorê, and who, as now stated, are Nhambiquára. This name of Uáikoákorê is given by the Parecí of the sub-tribes Kazinitî and Uaimaré of the rivers Arinos, Sacuriú-iná, Tahura-iná and Timalatiá to their kindred of the Kozárini group who inhabit the upper parts of the Rio Verde, the Juba, Calaçal and Jauxú. The term Kabixí is derogatory, implying an inferior condition.

The Nhambiquára are usually of medium height; they have large teeth, the abdomen rather prominent, muscular thighs, slender legs and well made feet. They perforate the nostrils, the nasal septum and the ear-lobes. Through the holes made in the nose they pass small pieces of wood, and from the ear lobes they hang ornaments made of small beads of coconut. They wear armlets, bracelets, leg ornaments and bead collars made from the fruit of the mbacúba. They live by the chase, but also plant maize, yams, potatoes, mandioc, and beans. They smoke leaves similar to Brazilian tobacco and do not use hammocks but sleep on the ground, like the Campa-atsíri and the Amúésa of the Gran Pajonal.

In the collection made by Colonel Rondon for the National Museum at Rio de Janeiro there is an alimentary paste similar to the Kêtêhê of the Parecí, made from pounded mandioc. The native *breu* or bitumen is used with string to fasten arrow points to their shafts. It appears to be a mixture of Oaniní and wax, and is preserved in leaves of the Malé-malá palm. It melts at a very low temperature.

To fell trees a stone axe, fixed in a wooden handle by means of cord and bitumen, is used. The Indian who succeeds in felling certain trees with this primitive instrument receives as reward an arara or mutúm feather for a nose-ornament. Such a decoration is usually reserved for warlike prowess among the natives of Brazil. The bows are large, strong, of red wood and well-polished, with semi-cylindrical transversal section. Those in the Rondon collection vary from 1m. 80 to 2m. 38 in length. To draw an arrow of 50cm. between the larger bow and its string of tucum a traction force of 60 kilos. is necessary, as verified by the dynamometer. There are five types of arrows. They have two musical instruments, one, a double flute made of two pieces of bamboo tied together, the other, two concave disks of calabash, about 8 cm. in diameter, united at the edges by a strip of Malá-malá and breu. The upper disk has three orifices.

145 It seemed to me that these people get their full set of teeth much earlier.

Those molars which are popularly called wisdom teeth, and which are tending to disappear in the white race, are no mere ornaments among the Indians. They are endowed with significant size and function.

264 I believe that the excessive amount of work required of their
145 digestive system is reflected in these dental characteristics. The large molars appear earlier because they are needed for frequent and powerful mastication.

262 They always eat of everything, without discrimination or restraint. To my knowledge, there is no animal they will not eat. They discard only the intestinal tract of the game they kill.

[194] The Indians of the Juruena River consume more meat than the
[514] others; those from José Bonifácio eat more manioc and maize. Their intestinal gas makes their company unpleasant. They all have furred
164 tongues, and many have gums affected by alveolar piorrhea. Their teeth, contrary to frequent cases among the Sambaqui skulls, do not suffer from the state of wear which Lund described in 1842 for Lagoa Santa man; but they suffer from caries which do not spare the crowns.

A special skin disease prevails among the Indians of the Serra do Norte. (1)

[113]

1. See E. Roquette-Pinto, Lectures at the Biblioteca Nacional [National Library] on March 15, 1913, and at the Sociedade Brasileira de Dermatologia, Policlinica Geral do Rio de Janeiro [Brazilian Dermatological Society, Main Polyclinic of Rio de Janeiro], on June 11, 1912.

[181] Actually, some officials of the Rondon Commission had noticed the characteristic scabs of the disease. Owing perhaps to a lack of typical cases such as I witnessed, however, they took the spots
[513] to be mere skin exfoliations caused by the friction of the body on the ground, where the Serra do Norte Indians sleep.

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Indians are as well protected against the actinic action of the sun as if they were wearing the thick clothing of the Sahara tribes. Because they are nude, however, the air circulates freely around their body, reducing the heat and hastening the evaporation of perspiration.

"If exposed to sunlight, in accordance with the property described above, urucu absorbs only slightly the heat of the sun, reflecting the red rays and also the heat rays. For this reason the white man or one with slight pigmentation, when smeared with urucu, does not perspire excessively as does the Negro under the same circumstances.

"In view of the properties ascribed to urucu by our experiments, and of the widespread usage of this dye among the Indians of tropical America, we believe that it should be considered not as merely ornamental but as an effective means of protection against tropical light and heat."

164 [184] The manifestations and evolution of the disease lead us to believe that it is a dermatomycosis. The habitat of the pathogenic fungus is probably to be found in the soil. This would explain why the personnel of the Line, who have lived among the Nambicuara for years, have not yet contracted the disease. This also applies to the Paressi, who are now in contact with the diseased Indians. Both groups, unlike [513] the Nambicuara, make use of hammocks and never sleep on the ground.

To this day, no microscopic examination of the scales has been made, and I am not responsible for this failure. In 1912 the Indians [123] would not allow us to collect the necessary materials; they were still suspicious.

361 [226] We do not know yet what determines these shifts to nearby locations; they may perhaps be caused by the death of an [768] Indian or by some communal misfortune. The distances involved are so small that the moves could not possibly derive from any significant ecological changes.

342 In order to keep rain water from seeping underneath the thatch, the Tagnani and Tawite Indians cover the inner ground perimeter of their conical huts with a series of overlapping plates made of jatobá shells.

The rain does not leak in.

354 It would not be fair to imagine the interior of the huts as hot and stuffy; air penetrates freely in between the leaves.

Nevertheless, the situation changes when the Indians light their small fires. Happily for them, the thatch is sufficiently permeable to keep their eyes free from the grave diseases often encountered among primitive peoples whose dwellings are smoky.

352 Household furnishings are rudimentary; except for the grids mentioned above and a few large pots, nothing else might properly be termed a piece of furniture. All other objects are tools, artifacts, [484] weapons and ornaments [227] [plates p. 222] which they carry with them on every journey, no matter how brief. Only the heavier mortars and graters, which cannot be carried easily, are left in the hut. These barbarians in turn could say: "Omnia mea mecum porto" [everything that is mine I carry with me].

Straw pallets, cured hides, hammocks, sleeping platforms, cots and true beds represent types of bedding characteristic of different stages of civilization.

513 The use of pallets already indicates a certain degree of advancement; but the Nambicuara have no bed other than the earth. They sleep on the bare ground.

They did not possess the hammock, that inseparable companion of their neighbors the Paressi; now that they are acquainted with it, they hold it in high regard. It was difficult to obtain any rest among them during the night; no sooner had we set up our hammock than three or four candidates would appear... And once they had taken over, it was hard to get it back. We were frequently awakened by Indians who forcibly asserted their desire to sleep in the hammocks we occupied.

7: Roquette-Pinto--26 E-4, 5 (no date)1938 SP17 Nambicuara SP17 (ca. 1912)

513 At the post of Três Buritis, where they camped with us for a few days, they disputed every night the occupancy of a crude wooden table where the station personnel ate their meals; they already appreciated our habit of sleeping above the ground.

Why, then, did they not make use of the hammocks? Because they were not familiar with it.

[248 824] They are capable of plaiting cotton and tucum (1) thread more

1. Bactris setosa (Ed.).

than adequately enough to make a hammock; and they are also capable of appreciating their neighbor's hammock, as indeed they do now.

This ethnographic trait attests to the inferior position of the Serra do Norte Indians.

[171] [228] This unfamiliarity [with the hammock] is in fact characteristic of the large Ge-Botocudo group of Brazil, which in the consensus of all who have studied it comprises the most backward aborigines in the Americas.

All Serra do Norte Indians sleep directly upon the earth. They spread nothing in the way of leaves, straw, pallets or hides between themselves and the ground.

They nearly always rest on their side, pillowing the head on the forearm.

516 The men rarely sit directly on the ground; they usually squat. The women do the reverse. If standing in one spot for more than a few minutes, a man will usually flex one leg and rest his foot against the other knee; the women assume a characteristic posture which I have never seen described and which is clearly shown on the photographs we took.

They cross their thighs, thrusting the right part of the pelvis forward and the left part forcibly backward. The longitudinal axis of the right foot, if extended, cuts that of the left foot almost at a right angle.

They frequently cross their arms.

201 When excited or roused by happiness or fear, they repeatedly slap the back of their head with their open right hand. When displeased, they make the same gesture while exclaiming: "Ikátnerá!"